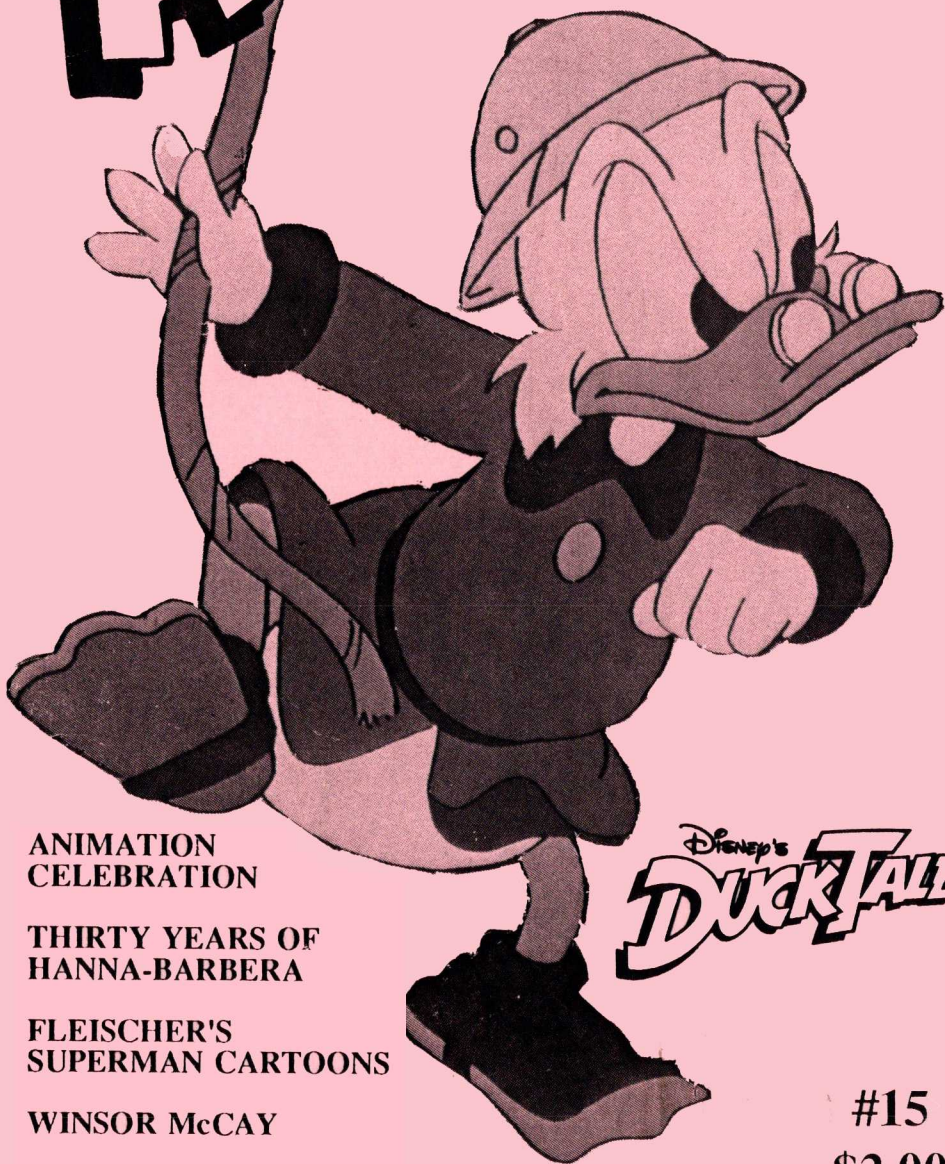


ANIMATO!



ANIMATION
CELEBRATION

THIRTY YEARS OF
HANNA-BARBERA

FLEISCHER'S
SUPERMAN CARTOONS

WINSOR McCAY

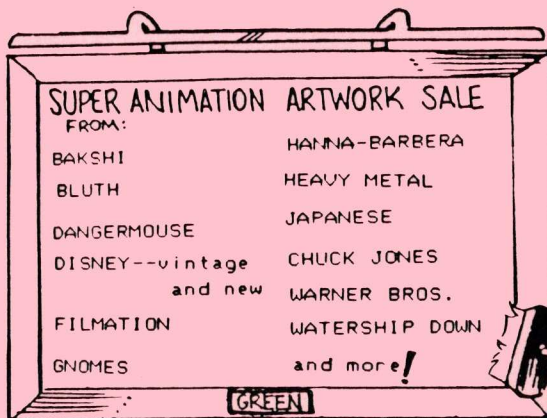
...AND MUCH MORE!

Disney's
DUCKTALES

#15

\$2.00

GET ANIMATED!



"ONE-OF-A-KIND"
CARTOON ART
775 LIVINGSTONE PLACE · DECATUR
GEORGIA 30030 · 404 · 377-3332



IN THIS ISSUE

2 Editorial

3 Fanmail From Some Flounder

Letters to *Animato*.

5 In the Temple of the Muses

David Bastian visits the Second Los Angeles International Animation Celebration.

7 My Youth In Cartoonia

Bob Miller looks back on thirty years of Hanna-Barbera animation. Part one of two parts.

14 Uncle Scrooge vs. He-Man

Harry McCracken tells us about *DuckTales*, Disney's first made-for-syndication cartoon show.

20 Koko Comments

Fleischer's Superman cartoons, part one. By G. Michael Dobbs.

24 Harlequin

Tidbits and trivia from Jim Korkis.

26 Flipbooks

Winsor McCay's Peaceable Kingdom. By David Bastian.

29 'Toons on Tape

Matthew Hasson reviews *Yellow Submarine* and other recent videotape releases.

31 Short Subjects

Filmation's *Pinocchio*, Disney's *Alice*, and more.

36 The Fox Report

Animation news from John Cawley.

(*Animato's* gossip columnist, Thelma Scumm, is on vacation this issue. She'll be back next issue with her usual pithy examination of the current animation scene.)

Co-Editor/Publisher

Mike Ventrella

Co-Editor/Art Director

Harry McCracken

Contributing Writers

David Bastian

Jerry Beck

John Cawley

G. Michael Dobbs

Matthew Hasson

Jim Korkis

Bob Miller

Thelma Scumm

Steve Segal

Special Thanks

Heidi Hooper

Natalie McCracken

Expanded Entertainment

Walt Disney Productions

Animato #15, Winter 1987-1988. Published at PO Box 1240, Cambridge MA 02238.

All articles (c) 1987 *Animato* except where noted. Submission of articles and artwork is welcome. They should be accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

ON OUR COVERS

Front cover: Uncle Scrooge looks like he's determined to find adventure in this pose from *DuckTales*. (See article on page 14.) (c) 1987 the Walt Disney Company.

Back cover: Bob Miller assembles a group portrait of many of the characters he discusses in his article on page 10. Characters (c) 1987 Hanna-Barbera.

ANIMATORIAL



Illustration by Bob Miller; character (c) 1987 Hanna-Barbera

Those of you who turn first to *Animato's* masthead will have noticed that there's been a change. Mike Ventrella, who has done the lion's share of the work of putting together each *Animato* since the magazine's first issue in 1983, has decided it's time to stop and catch his breath. So that he'll be able to do that, I (that's me, Harry McCracken, speaking) have picked up most of the workload of putting editing *Animato*, though Mike will still be involved with producing the magazine in numerous ways. (In particular, all checks and money orders should continue to be made out to him.)

You may also have noted the fact that the time lapse between this *Animato* and the last one has been unusually long. We apologize for that - and give our heartfelt thanks to those of you who wrote to ask what the holdup was. We've been ironing out some of the many complications of publishing *Animato*, but we've come to the decision that we can't stick to a strict quarterly schedule and maintain - and improve - the magazine's standard of quality. Our publication schedule from now on will be a little less formal than before; our plan

is to bring out three issues of *Animato* a year. (Rest assured that the lengthy gap between issues #14 and #15 won't be typical.)

This issue of *Animato* also inaugurates some improvements in our graphic design which we hope you'll like. Little by little, *Animato* has come a long way from #1's Xerox reproduction, type-written copy, and much smaller page count. Although we have very little money to spend on production costs - color covers, slick paper, and other improvements are a *long* way away - we're quite proud of what we've accomplished on our shoestring budget.

Another improvement: by popular demand, we've started printing a number on the address label on the envelopes that subscriber copies of the magazine are mailed in. It's the number of the last issue of *Animato* on your subscription, which will give subscribers some advance warning of when it's time to renew. (We'll be sending reminder notes out, too - though *Animato's* renewal rate has always been gratifyingly high.)

Well, on with the show. As always, your comments are eagerly awaited.

Harry McCracken

fan mail from some flounder

Write to *Animato* at PO Box 1240, Cambridge MA 02238

Dear *Animato*:

I like the name of your letter column. Have you ever run an article on Bullwinkle or any other Jay Ward cartoons?

Charles Ulrich
Milwaukee, WI

(We haven't, but we'd love to run a good one. Jay Ward fans will want to check out Charles's Frostbite Falls Far-flung Flier newsletter; see his ad elsewhere in this issue.)

Dear *Animato*:

Sure enjoyed *Animato* #14, especially the Droids/Ewoks piece!

For what it's worth, you can tell Thelma that I conducted a *small* poll, and *Robin Hood* was considered better than *Aristocats*, 8 to 1!!

Dave Bennett
Van Nuys, CA

Dear *Animato*:

Kudos to Timothy Fay! I'm shocked to discover a computer science major not only discussing cartoons intelligently, but *drawing* them as well. Somebody stop him if he decides to change his major to art, though. A BA in art will do about as much for you as trying to use your Mickey Mouse Club membership card as identification. Take it from one who learned the hard way.

Martha Froias
Frankfort, KY

Dear *Animato*:

Rather than continue this contest within the space of my column, I'd like

to briefly comment on some of the charges made by Shamus Culhane in his rebuttal of my review of his book in the last issue of *Animato*.

In 1977, well before the current revival of Fleischer cartoons, I asked permission to write a biography of Max Fleischer from his son Richard and his daughter Ruth. They consented, and I've spent thousands of hours and dollars gathering the raw material needed for such a project. From interviewing people, such as Culhane, to photocopying old magazine articles and reviews, to renting Fleischer cartoons to view, I've done the work necessary for the book. When Culhane says I shouldn't be the "official anything" because I wasn't an employee of the studio and wasn't there first-hand, he's missing the point. A writer attempts to recreate an era or a person through reportorial techniques. Shamus, you know that.

You also know that you didn't know "every person involved" with the Fleischer strike, Shamus. You want me to believe you knew all those assembly line workers when you hadn't worked at the studio in years? How could you have known all the people who traced and painted the cels? They were the ones on strike, and you were 3,000 miles away at the Disney Studio. *You were not an eyewitness to the strike*, unless you left something out of your book. You heard stories, I'm sure, once you got to Miami, but you weren't there.

You take great offense at my references to wanting to read your book to see what you didn't tell me in our interview, a

cordial, constructive interview in which you even told me that you had relatives living in a town next to mine in Massachusetts. I didn't mean to offend, Shamus, but simply state a fact. People planning to write a book often do hold back. No sin in that. I once asked Mickey Rooney for an interview when he was red-hot in *Sugar Babies*. He politely wrote me back explaining he wasn't granting interviews because of a book he was planning. No offense taken on my part; I was flattered he wrote me a personal note about my request. Now do you understand my remark?

You see, Shamus, I valued your opinions and anecdotes, as I considered you something of an outsider with a unique perspective. I too wish the Fleischers had done something with Wimpy. Yes, I agree that Max was not as far-sighted as I would have personally liked, but when one considers the wonderful humor of the Betty Boops, the fine adaptation of Popeye, the art and drama of the Superman cartoons (Hey Shamus, they probably weren't imitated by anyone because nobody wanted to spend \$65,000 on a one-reeler besides

Paramount), one has to admit Max did accomplish a lot.

Oh, and on the point about the cover; when someone puts a photo of persons, events, characters, or products on the cover of a book or magazine, they are hoping people will favorably associate the subject of the text inside with those graphics on the cover. Your explanation that you are entitled to use those characters because you worked within that era of theatrical animation doesn't hold water. If a man who made Bowery Boys comedies at Monogram put Bing Crosby and Bob Hope on the cover of his book because they were all contemporaries, wouldn't you call that misleading? Of course you would.

Other than being roasted for nothing, Mike, *Animato* #14 was a treat. The articles are branching out to include people who really should get some attention, such as Norman McLaren. You might see if someone could do a piece on the neat animation in the *Tracey Ullman Show*.

G. Michael Dobbs
Indian Orchard, MA

SUBSCRIPTION AND BACK ISSUES INFORMATION

Subscribe to *Animato*! \$10.00 (\$15.00 in US funds outside of US/Mexico/Canada) will get you the next four issues hot off the presses, before they reach stores. (Please make all checks and money orders payable to Mike Ventrella.) New readers will want to catch up on our back issues, too. #1-5 are sold out, but the following are still available at \$2.00 each postpaid:

- #6: *Yellow Submarine*; Disney Channel; Fleischer's Einstein feature
- #7: *The Black Cauldron*; Walter Lantz; Richard Williams; Grim Natwick
- #8: Bob Clampett; Saturday AM '85; Porky Pig; Fleischer on video
- #9: Will Vinton; Shamus Culhane; Chuck Jones; *Tournee*; *Starchaser*
- #10: Walt Disney; Shamus Culhane; *Brave Little Toaster*; TV animation
- #11: *Great Mouse Detective*; Mike Jittlov; *Star Trek*; Fleischer history
- #12: *An American Tail*; Saturday AM '86; Disney books; Don Bluth
- #13: *Animation Celebration*; Beatles cartoons; Claymation
- #14: *Snow White*; computer animation; Norman McLaren

Each issue also contains more features, including our regular news, trivia, and other columns. Order from *Animato*, PO Box 2238, Cambridge MA 02238.

IN THE TEMPLE OF THE MUSES

The Second Los Angeles International Animation Celebration

BY DAVID BASTIAN

Where can you go (you may ask) to view the latest European animated feature films, over twelve hours of the latest independent shorts and some historically significant cartoons which you've only read about, share a movie theater with critics and industry people alike, and meet some of animation's most prominent figures? Why, the 2nd Los Angeles International Animation Celebration, of course. Beginning at the Wadsworth theater and moving to the Nuart (both in West L.A.), an international group of professionals, amateurs, and fans were whisked into a show of biblical proportions that, after eight short days, we wished would never end.

The festival kicked off with the world premiere of ex-Disney animator Jerry Rees's *The Brave Little Toaster*. In this long-awaited feature, five household appliances set out on an "incredible journey" to reunite themselves with their owner, and along the way brave the elements (an electrical storm, a waterfall, quicksand), man (a sadistic repairman), and finally obsolescence (a group of electronic components who refer to themselves as "the cutting edge" of technology). Not only was this the most delightful film in the festival (and more Disneyesque than the last four

Disney features), it also contained the wittiest and most literate script to grace a children's film in years. These appliances are silver-tongued, the most memorable being the sarcastic radio (voiced by Jon Lovitz), and a hard-headed air conditioner who does a good Jack Nicholson impression (and nearly steals the entire movie with one scene). Why the Disney folks declined to put their name on this wonderful film remains a mystery. (Apparently they rejected first the whole project, then upon its completion by Rees, the privilege of releasing it.)

At the opening-night party in the lantern-lit yard outside the Wadsworth immediately following the showing, attendees exchanged their party-ticket stubs for an original cel from the film. *Robotech* fans bypassed the party to view *Robotech: the Untold Story*, a new chapter in the cult Japanimation series.

Despite the appeal of *Toaster*, however, it took second place in the 30-minutes-and-over category to *Footrot Flats*, Murray Ball's film adaptation of his own New Zealand comic strip. As reviewed in *Animato* #14, the film *Footrot Flats* was geared towards devotees of the strip, and therefore difficult for we not in on the jokes to follow. But there was plenty of action, and the tone was "Bloom-

Countyish" enough to hold our attention. A sleeper, though, in my opinion.

Other corners of the earth were represented feature-wise: Denmark's Swan Film Productions premiered *Valhalla*, directed by Peter Madsen and Jeff Varab (late of Disney), and with animation and original song by Borge Ring (*Anna and Bella*). The production was lavish, even though the characters tended to resemble the *Smurfs* cast from time to time. The real problem with this film was with its story. The Norse gods Thor and Loki embark on a mission to the realm of the giants, and end up taking part in several rigged sporting events. Hardly exciting, and mythologically inaccurate (as legend has it, Loki is supposed to be the son of a giant), *Valhalla's* meandering script never catches up with its slick production values.

From Cuba came Juan Padron's *Vampires in Havana*, a fast-paced film with the exact opposite problem: the animation was poor, but the hilarious story and dialogue carried it along in the tradition of *Bullwinkle*.

Hanna-Barbera trotted out a problem child of theirs, *Rock Odyssey* (also reviewed in the last *Animato*), a confusing mess of a film, the final cut of which even astounded the two animators sent by Joe Barbera (a no-show at the last minute) to tout it. Half the industry stood in line for what they knew would be their only chance to view this insipidly-penned hallucination.

I entered *Laputa: the Castle in the Sky* as if I were about to watch a two-hour episode of *Marine Boy*. But this feature from the very talented Hayao Miyazaki was a suprise and a delight. Though the main characters flashed those big Bambi eyes we are so used to in Japanimation, the movement was much smoother, the colors more pastel (the film had a soft-focus look to it that made it very atmospheric), and the style of drawing utilized 19th century engravings to help push the "Japanese look" into new territory. In addition to this, *Laputa* was



The Brave Little Toaster

the fastest-paced and most exciting film in the festival. If and when it comes out on video cassette, it will definitely require an additional inspection.

Arriving "straight from the vaults," eight of Max Fleischer's *Superman* cartoons were projected in 35mm for the first time since their original release in the '40s. Jerry Beck emceed this tribute to some of the most technically brilliant shorts ever created during animation's "golden age."

Five evenings of tributes showcased the careers of some of the biggest names in animation history, beginning with possibly the most congenial man in the field: Bruno Bozzetto. Twelve of Bozzetto's short films and three clips from *Allegro Non Troppo* bookended an informal talk between festival chairman Terry Thoren and Bozzetto, who elucidated on the filmmaking scene in Italy, the problems with funding a large-scale project, and his recently completed live-action feature *Under the Chinese Restaurant*.

An overly-modest Ralph Bakshi showed up to allow an appreciative audience to pay homage to this most misunderstood of talents. Clips from five of his features plus segments from his work at Terrytoons (*The Mighty Heroes*), and Famous Studios (*Marvin Digs*), and the recent Rolling Stones



The Simpsons

video *Harlem Shuffle*, when all projected end-to-end made for a pretty impressive program. (The clips from his features were all scenes that showed him off as the gifted writer that he is.) In a casual interview with Leonard Maltin, Bakshi feigned disappointment over his early works, commenting that given more time and money "it could have been better." The questions from the audience were predictable: "Does he plan to conclude his *Lord of the Rings* film?" Yes! "What's next for Ralph?" A new series of *Mighty Mouse* cartoons for Saturday morning!

Also payed tribute to were the late Disney animator Milt Kahl, with fellow nine-old-man Marc Davis on hand to share his anecdotes about Kahl and the mixed blessing of being assigned to do those ever-so-tedious human characters; and the National Film Board of Canada's Norman McLaren, featuring rare shorts and never-before-seen test footage for his pixillated film *Neighbors* (1952). Fellow animators Grant Munro and John Wilson of the NFBC shared their remembrances of McLaren, and expressed the importance of never allowing this most influential of talents to be forgotten.

And finally, there were no less than two tributes to Walter Lantz: one for the

kids, with Woody Woodpecker and Andy Panda (the Dick Lundy model) "in person"; and one for the adults, containing such rarely seen items as Lantz's animated segment for the 1930 feature *The King of Jazz*, and two *Oswald* shorts.

I had seen shorts produced in England before (Animation City's *Skywhales*, Aardman Animation's *Conversation Pieces* series), but never knew that they were produced for the five-year-old Channel 4, Britain's new experimental-programming outlet. Thanks to an entire show of animated shorts partially funded by Channel 4, I now know. New shorts by these studios, as well as Alison De Vere's haunting *The Black Dog* were presented to an astonished American audience who wishes we had such a channel here in the states.

Just as astonishing were the films in the salute to Hungary's Pannonia studio, which gave us Csaba Varga's hilarious *Augusta* series of clay animations, and Ferenc Rofusz's Oscar-winning *The Fly*, as well as the feature *The White Mare*. This year they offered up eleven new shorts, and Bela Ternovsky's feature *Cat City*, a witty gangster spoof that takes place in the year 80 A.M.M. (Anno Mickey Mouse).

When you think of animation produced for network television, you rarely conjure up adjectives like "fresh," "timely," "innovative," or "witty." Screened under the title of "New Age TV Animation," however, were examples of just such work. Included were clips from the Fox network's *Tracey Ullman Show* (Matt "Life in Hell" Groening's *The Simpsons* and M.K. Brown's *Dr. N! Godatu*) produced by Klasky-Csupo Inc., sequences from CBS's *Pee-Wee's Playhouse* that included animation created at Broadcast Arts in New York and Aardman Animation in England (*Penny*), and the "Family Dog" episode of NBC's *Amazing Stories* that was designed by Tim Burton (director of *Vincent* and *Pee-Wee's Big Adventure*) and directed by Cal



Krysar

Arts grad Brad Bird. In attendance to talk with the audience were Klasky-Csupo's Gabor Csupo (formerly with Hungary's Pannonia studio), Matt Groening, and *Pee-Wee* producer Prudence "Pooh" Fenton and director Stephen R. Johnson (who breathed life into Peter Gabriel's *Sledgehammer* video and the Talking Heads' *Road to Nowhere*) and Brad Bird. Hidden in the audience: *Family Dog* voice artist Stan Freberg.

In addition to all this there were three shows of animation produced for children, animation produced by children, computer animation, a lightning-spaced show of animated commercials, new animation from Czechoslovakia (which included my favorite film in the festival, the mesmerizing 53-minute *Krysar* or *The Pied Piper* by Jiri Barta, using wood and bronze puppets and actual mice!), and eight programs of short films in competition.

Over 200 hundred films (roughly half of all the entrants) were screened, and not only am I impressed with how many of them I can remember, I could rant about

them for pages on end: Sally Cruikshank's *Face Like a Frog*, Paul Driessen's *Sunny Side Up*, Wendy Tilby's *Tables of Content*, Aardman Animation's *Babylon*, Michael Sporn's *The Amazing Bone* (2nd prize winner in the children's category), and *The Characters* from Holland's Evert de Beijer (1st prize, 5-15 minute category). Nineteen awards were presented in nine categories, and in addition the audiences attending the eight programs of films in competition were given ballots to vote for their favorite film in the festival. This award easily went to the recipient of the biggest and most laughs: Bill Plympton's *Your Face* (which also took 2nd place in the category for "First Work.") Two Bob Clampett scholarships of \$1,000 each were awarded to Jim Reardon for *Ouchless* and Fabio Ligmin for *When the Bats are Quiet* (which also ran off with 1st prize in the "First Work" category).

The L.A. Film Critics' Award of \$2500 in Kodak film stock went to Jacques Drouin and Bretislav Pojar's *Nightangel* (which also took 2nd Prize, 15-30 minute category) and Bob Kurtz's



The Man Who Planted Trees

Drawing on My Mind (which also undeservedly received 1st place in the "shorter than 5 minutes" category for blandly illustrating a George Carlin comedy routine).

It was no surprise that *The Man Who Planted Trees*, Frederick Bach's epic tale of a man who performs an act of creation "worthy of God," won both 1st place in the 15-30 minute category and the festival's Grand Prize. The English translation of the film being still in preparation, visiting Canadian John Wilson narrated a simultaneous translation of the text.

The real surprise of the festival was when live-action film director Paul Bartel (*Eating Raoul*, *Lust in the Dust*) emerged from the audience in awe of the quality of so many of the films, and created his own award: The American Animator Award of \$1000, which he presented to Cavrillo Gnatovich for *Lazar*.

L.A. film critic Charles Solomon was accompanied by hisses and boos as he approached the stand during the awards ceremony. All week he had been covering the festival in the *Los Angeles Times*, and being overly harsh on the features in the festival (which I imagine is his idea of supporting the festival). When his negative review of Bakshi's 1975 film *Coonskin* (which the festival

was to screen) came out, Ralph threatened to pull the film. Fortunately he relented, and we were allowed to view this rarely-seen work. (Where do people like Solomon come from, anyway?)

My only qualm with this festival was with its concentration. All thirty-three events were compacted into eight days; two of those days consisted of seven feature-length events lined up end-to-end with no break! That's thirteen straight hours of film! (Someone suggested that the official festival poster should be a picture from *A Clockwork Orange* of Alex, eyes pried open and receiving eye-drops while being bombarded with images.) I'm sure the organizers did not predict that so many people would want to try to see everything. But the audience knew that this would be their sole opportunity to see most of the films before they were sent back to the owners and countries of origin. Some repeat showings, like at the '85 Celebration, would have been nice.

As tired as my eyes are, though, one year better be all that's needed to build up the strength to take this marathon ride again; Terry Thoren plans to have the 3rd International Animation Celebration next year and every other year thereafter to avoid the same schedule as the Annecy festival in France. When asked if he didn't mind colliding with Zagreb (which takes place on even-numbered years), he responded, "Who would go to Zagreb? Ever been there?"

(The official program for the 2nd L.A. International Animation Celebration (which is also the premiere issue of *Animation Magazine*) is available for \$3.00 from Animation Celebration, 222 S. Barrington Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90064.)

David Bastian teaches film animation at the University of Cincinnati. Double features mean nothing to him now.

Thirty Years of Hanna-Barbera

MY YOUTH IN CARTOONIA

PART ONE

ARTICLE AND ILLUSTRATIONS
BY BOB MILLER

One of the pleasures I had as a kid was spending some time with a bear named Yogi, a hound named Huckleberry, and a 'gator named Wally. These were the days when parental pressure groups were but a cloud on the horizon, and the networks allowed the funny animals to be funny. At that time they did things that would be impossible to do today. Touche Turtle used a sword. Quick Draw McGraw could fire a gun. Chopper the bulldog could beat up Fibber Fox. And Yogi Bear was allowed to - gasp! - steal picnic baskets. Horrors!

It was true Yogi and his Hanna-Barbera friends didn't move very much. But they moved more than people did in the comic books. And I didn't have to pay to see them, either. They came every day to my TV set, and they were fun to watch. They were my friends.

Huckleberry Hound, whose show premiered in 1958, was Hanna-Barbera's first big success, immensely popular with children and adults like. And why not? Who could resist his easygoing charm, his warm, backwoods manner, and his knack of understatement - as when a log would fall on him and he'd say, "My, that's a right heavy log."

Even more popular was Yogi Bear, the lovable rogue of Jellystone Park. Being a nonconformist, he and his sidekick

Boo-Boo made life miserable for Ranger Smith (not to mention parent watchdog groups objecting to the bear's rule-breaking and thievery). So in his later TV appearances, Yogi rarely touched a picnic basket. When asked about the changes, Yogi replied, "I think the writers are putting me on a diet."

While some of the gags appealed to me on a kid level, others had adult appeal, as when Yogi set Boo-Boo aside on a log, and said, "Boo-Boo, I think it's time you learned about the birds and the bees." Boo-Boo's reply: "Well what do you want to know, Yogi?"

The show introduced the Captive Animal Syndrome, in which the star animal-in-captivity tries to outwit its human master. Hanna-Barbera repeated this formula in later shows - *Wally Gator*, *Magilla Gorilla*, *Breezly and Sneezly*, *Squiddley Diddle*, and *Help! It's the Hair Bear Bunch*.

One episode introduced Yakky Doodle, the cute little duck whose primary reason for existence was to tug on your heartstrings. The story was simple: Fibber tries to eat Yakky; Chopper beats Fibber to a pulp. Between the poundings and not getting a meal, I wondered how that fox survived.

Quick Draw McGraw was the sheriff of a one-horse town, and the horse as well.



Huckleberry Hound and the Goofy Guards. Characters (c) 1987 Hanna-Barbera.

Baba Louie, his burro sidekick, described him by pointing to his head. "He's got a lot up there. No brains. Just an empty lot." Sometimes Quick Draw would quick change into the notorious El Kabong, who guitar-bashed hombres with a loud "kabong!" Zorro ate his heart out. Anti-violence censors had heart attacks.

Nowadays Quick Draw appears in *Yogi's Treasure Hunt*, but without his "Baba boy." According to Daws Butler, it's because of fears that Baba would outrage viewers who would consider him an offensive Mexican stereotype - a charge Butler says is ridiculous because Baba was always much smarter than Quick Draw.

One of Quick Draw's adversaries was a sheep-stealing (and scene-stealing) mountain lion who loved to quote Shakespeare. This was Snagglepuss, who would later "exit, stage right" into his own series.

I never got to see *Loopy de Loop*, the French timber wolf whose mission was to restore the good name of Wolfdom by doing good deeds for everyone. Since wolves had a reputation for doing things

like stealing sheep and terrorizing little pigs, it was an uphill struggle for Loopy, whose good intentions were constantly misunderstood. (The fact that he had a strong French accent didn't help, either.) About 48 stories were released to theaters, but have only rarely been shown on television.

The Flintstones didn't appeal that much to me. Fred was loud-mouthed and abrasive - not exactly a likeable adult role model. I thought their "low tech" was silly rather than funny, such as Wilma using an elephant's snorkel to vacuum the carpet; Fred using a brontosaurus as a steam shovel; and Wilma using a bird as a phonograph needle. Lucky for them the SPCA hadn't been invented yet.

What really fired my imagination was *The Jetsons*. This was a world of elevated apartments, chatty robots, and traffic jams in the sky. How I wished I could have my bed made at the touch of a button. How I wished I could ride the moving sidewalks. And boy, how I wished Rosie the Robot was my maid!

In 1962 Hanna-Barbera introduced a

new batch of cartoons for syndication: *Wally Gator*, *Touche Turtle*, and *Lippy the Lion*. What these characters had in common was that they were all hard-luck heroes - or what English professors would call "antiheroes." Whatever "misadventure" they had, they would lose more than they would win. Murphy's law reigned supreme.

Lippy the Lion and Hardy Har Har were two vagabonds who tried for the good life but could never quite make it. Hardy, the perpetually pessimistic hyena, would groan, "Oh dear, oh my. I just know something awful will happen." Sure enough, something awful did happen. One time they wanted to go to jail because there the prisoners were fed three square meals a day. But circumstances forced them to leave just before the guards served the gourmet meal. (Who says cartoons don't have social comment?)

Touche Turtle swashbanged his way through history with his sheepdog sidekick, Dum Dum. His battle cry was "Touche, away!" As he rushed to the

rescue, Dum Dum would follow only to crash into the nearest tree.

(By now you've noticed that Hanna-Barbera sidekicks have something in common: Boo-Boo, Ding-a-Ling, So-So, Dum Dum, Droopalong, Klunk, Silly, Bumbler. With names like these, the hero never had to worry about an identity crisis.)

A sidekick was what Wally Gator didn't have - which was a rarity for a Hanna-Barbera star. This giddy alligator was perhaps the studio's most expressive character, in design, personality, and voice modeled after comedian Ed Wynn. A prime example of the Captive Animal syndrome, his misadventures resulted from his attempts to break out of the zoo. One time he was caught smoking a cigar by a female 'gator, who promptly mashed it in his face before the censors could find out.

Lippy, Touche, and Wally have since vanished from the syndication market, buried by the likes of *Go-Bots* and *GI Joe*. Slapstick humor is out; robots and war are in.

Peter Potamus and So-So. The diner proprietors are Ruff and Reddy, the stars of Hanna-Barbera's first made-for-tv cartoons. Characters (c) 1987 Hanna-Barbera.





On a roll: Breezly, Touche Turtle, Sneezly, and Dum Dum. Characters (c) 1987 Hanna-

Next came *The Magilla Gorilla Show* in 1963. Magilla was a likeable character, but I was getting tired of the Captive Animal syndrome. Likewise, the feud between Punkin Puss and Mushmouse was a rehash of cat versus mouse, done better by *Tom and Jerry* and *Pixie and Dixie and Mr. Jinks*. Breezly and Sneezly was really an arctic version of *Yogi Bear*. And *Richochet Rabbit* was basically *Touche Turtle* in a western setting. I was tired of antiheroes. I wanted to see a show with adventure, with a hero who had a chance of winning.

Along came *Peter Potamus and his Magic Flying Balloon*. Like other Hanna-Barbera heroes, the hefty hippo suffered inevitable bashings, blastings and bruising - but he was different in that he could actually fight back and win. His "secret" weapon was the Hippo Hurricane Holler, which he used to blow the villains to oblivion. It was a catharsis for Peter, and for viewers like me who wanted to see the villains lose for a change.

Peter and So-So, his simian companion, globe-trotted their way

through history in their magic time balloon. Like *Doctor Who*, the purple 'potamus involved himself wherever/whenever he went, doing things like battling dragons, robots, ghosts, ogres, tax collectors, and even the Big Bad Wolf. Since he was capable of traveling anywhere and to any time, I expected him to drop in on the Jetsons, or team up with Quick Draw McGraw, or go swashbuckling with *Touche Turtle* - but it never came to pass, much to my disappointment.

Peter's companion series was *Yippie, Yappie and Yahooey*, aka "The Goofy Guards." Three clumsy canines in musketeer attire try to protect the King, who often lamented that "I need guards to protect me from my guards." Until Disney's *Adventures of the Gummi Bears* in 1985, these were last made-for-TV animals to carry swords.

In the next Animato, Bob concludes his look at Hanna-Barbera by remembering Jonny Quest, the H-B superheroes, and other Hanna-Barbera cartoons of the 1960s and 1970s.

UNCLE SCROOGE VS. HE-MAN

DISNEY ENTERS THE
SYNDICATION MARKET
WITH *DUCKTALES*

BY HARRY MCCrackEN

In some respects, *DuckTales*, Walt Disney Television's new five-days-a-week syndicated cartoon series, is a major departure for the company. The studio's foray into regular made-for-TV animated programs of any kind is still young, and never before has it attempted to produce so much TV animation for one project (*DuckTales*'s first season is comprised of 65 half-hour episodes). Perhaps the most significant break with Disney tradition is that, unlike Disney's first two TV cartoon series, it features established Disney characters: Huey, Dewey and Louie, Uncle Scrooge, and on occasion Donald Duck himself.

Although Disney's wholehearted move into made-for-TV animation is a recent development, the studio's association with television is almost as old as the medium itself. Walt Disney's foresight in exploitation of new technologies is legendary, and the Disney programs of the 1950s - *The Mickey Mouse Club*, *Disneyland*, and others - are classics of the industry. The studio has produced numerous programs for network and syndication airing since then, and the 1983 introduction of the Disney Channel once again put Disney in the forefront of

video entertainment.

But the bulk of these programs, and of the Disney Channel's programming, has been live-action. Judicious use has been made of the library of theatrical Disney animation: *The Mickey Mouse Club* introduced the Disney shorts to a new generation, and *Disneyland* and its descendants, and the Disney Channel, have shown substantial amounts of footage from the shorts and features, if often in edited form. (Most of the great animated features have, of course, never been shown in their entirety on TV.)

And over the years, the studio scattered bits and pieces of new animation into its television programs. Jiminy Cricket made well-remembered educational appearances on *The Mickey Mouse Club*. *Disneyland*'s early episodes sometimes made use of large amounts of new animation of Mickey, Donald, and the gang, the best of which ranks with the finest animation ever produced for TV.

Later on, the Sunday-night Disney program's new animation was limited primarily to bridging sequences for old material featuring the created-for-TV character Ludwig Von Drake. The Von Drake sequences, which were dis-

continued by the mid 1960s, were to be the last significant TV animation produced by the studio for two decades. (The few pieces of new Disney-character animation which have popped up on the Disney Channel were not animated in-house.)

Never, as the TV animation industry was born and grew in the 1950s and 1960s, did Disney attempt a 100% animated series. This was intentional. "We've developed our own cartoon technique over a long period of years, and it's been pretty successful," Leonard Maltin quoted Walt Disney as saying in *Of Mice and Magic*. "Why should we change? We could turn out a half-hour cartoon every week, sure, but it would be cheating."

Most of the other Hollywood theatrical-animation studios either shared Disney's sentiment or didn't realize how profitable television animation would become. MGM is said to have rejected Bill Hanna and Joe Barbera's proposal to produce cartoons for TV; in the 1960s, Chuck Jones worked on several TV concepts for the studio, but they never made it to the air. The Warner Bros. and Walter Lantz studios both produced some new bridging material for TV airings of their theatrical animation, but didn't venture into TV animation any further than that.

The more mercantile New York studios went a little further, but without much success. Terry produced TV adventures of Deputy Dawg, Tom Terrific, and other characters during the 1960s, and Famous worked as a subcontractor on TV cartoons featuring Popeye, Marvel superheroes, and other characters. Neither studio's TV work prolonged its life by more than a few years.

The giants of TV animation were the new studios like Hanna-Barbera, Filmation, and DePatie-Freleng, which produced many hours of programming each year. By contrast, the Disney animation department, with its small staff and slow work habits, was producing roughly half-an-hour of animation a year in the 1970s

and early 1980s.

In 1984, a new team headed up by Michael Eisner was brought in to run the Disney studio, and a number of departures from Disney policy that the previous management had consciously resisted came about. Among them were R-rated Disney movies, the release of the great animated features on videocassette, and the entry of the studio into Saturday-morning animation production. The Disney entries in the Saturday-morning derby, like most of their competition, were to be merchandise-based shows with animation provided by an overseas (in this case Japanese) studio.

The potency of the Disney name quickly sold two Saturday-morning shows to the networks for the Fall 1985 season. *The Wuzzles* was developed in association with the Hasbro toy company; despite heavy merchandising, it survived only two shaky seasons, the first on CBS and the second on ABC. *The Gummi Bears*, airing on NBC has been more successful, and is presently in its third season. Both featured scripts and animation that were, by Saturday-morning standards, of unusually high quality.

The announcement of *DuckTales*, two years before the program's premiere, was part of a flood of new five-day-a-week syndicated cartoon projects that came in the wake of the success of Filmation's *He-Man*. But as the earliest publicity for the show pointed out, *DuckTales* stood out from the crowd of syndicated programs about transforming robots, musclebound warriors, and bloodthirsty mercenaries. The show was to be an adventure series starring Scrooge McDuck and Huey, Dewey and Louie; in other words, it was to take its cue from the comic book stories of Carl Barks, Uncle Scrooge's creator.

Barks's comics of the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s had been a rich mine of animation story material that had gone

unexplored for years. Uncle Scrooge had made two theatrical-animation appearances - in 1967's *Scrooge McDuck and Money* and 1983's *Mickey's Christmas Carol* - but neither of these featurettes bore much resemblance to Barks's work. *DuckTales* promised to make a more serious attempt to adapt Barks's wonderful stories, though it soon became clear that its adherence to them would not be absolute. Donald Duck himself would not be a regular character, for instance, and a publicity illustration that appeared in *Variety* prominently featured an oversized aviator duck who was clearly a major new character. (When the program reached TV screens, we would learn that his name was Launchpad McQuack.)

When *DuckTales* finally premiered, on the weekend of September 18-20, 1987, it was accompanied by an unusually large promotional fanfare that included not only games, dolls, and other merchandise, but also advertising tie-ins, a two-hour TV movie, and a half-hour TV documentary. The TV movie, *Treasure of the Golden Suns*, the first extended look at the show that public got, was actually four episodes of the series tied together into an extremely loose, episodic storyline. The movie served as an "origin" for the show, explaining Donald's absence (he had enlisted in the navy), how the nephews came to live with Uncle Scrooge, and so forth.

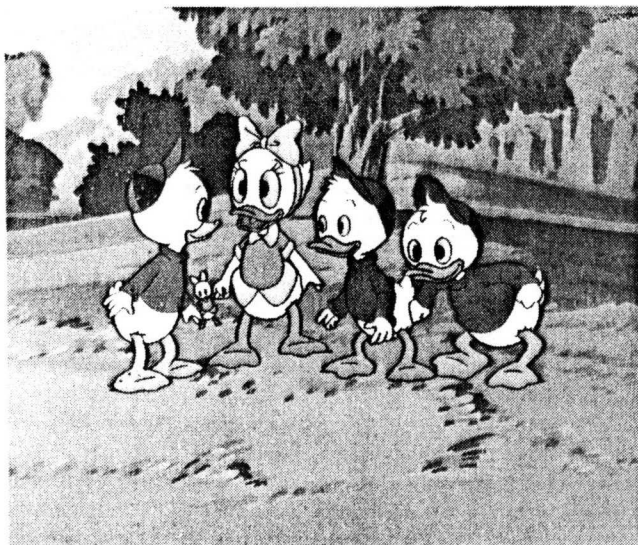
(Donald's few appearances in *DuckTales*, in this and a few other episodes, show that he's about as unsuited for limited-animation treatment as any cartoon character could be. Donald's voice makes lengthy dialogue impractical, a severe problem in a medium that has been called "illustrated radio." Furthermore, Donald is funny in large part because of the way he *moves*, and *DuckTales's* character animation, while far above average, is not good enough to do justice to such a character.)

DuckTales's production methods follow, in general outline, the system used for

most contemporary TV animation. The production team, including producers/directors Fred Wolf and Alan Zaslove, story editors Ted Anasti, Patsy Cameron, and *Gummi Bears* veteran Jymn Magon, and art director Brad Landreth, create scripts, record the soundtracks, and design the show's visual aspects in the United States. For cost reasons, the actual animation is done by Japan's TMS Entertainment and Taiwan's Wang Film Productions. This basic production technique is used by every major American TV studio with the exception of Filmation; Disney's product has less of a foreign flavor to it than most such animation because more of the work is done stateside, and the overseas production is more closely watched over than is often the case.

As of this writing, *DuckTales* is wrapping up the first airing of its 65 episodes, and it's a good time to reflect on the show's strengths and weaknesses. Judging the program's success is a complicated matter; how it strikes the cartoon fan depends in part on what yardstick it's measured against. Compared to TV animation in general - and syndicated five-day-a-week programming in particular - *DuckTales* shines in every respect. The storylines and dialogue are imaginative, the colors are vivid and appealing, and the animation is smooth and reasonably well-timed.

The voice cast, headed up by Alan Young as Scrooge and Russi Taylor as the nephews, is also substantially better than average. The supporting cast and reoccurring characters, voiced by professionals including Terry McGovern (Launchpad), Hal Smith (Gyro Gearloose), Frank Welker and Chuck McCann (the Beagle Boys), June Foray (Maga De Spell) and Will Ryan (Pegleg Pete), are all well-cast, even if none of the performances match the inspiration of the best limited-animation voice work, like that in Jay Ward's work.



Old friends Huey, Dewey, and Louie, and new Duckburg denizen Webb Vanderquack, one of the characters created for *DuckTales*. (c) 1987 the Walt Disney Company.

Visually, the program has its share of flaws. In particular, the quality of the artwork varies sharply from episode to episode and sometimes from scene to scene. For every handsome backdrop or enjoyable piece of personality animation, there's an appallingly bad background or a scene in which a character moves with the robotic lack of emotion that characterizes most TV animation. The lack of consistency can be chalked up in part to the brisk production schedule that any five-times-a-week TV cartoon must have, and partially to the fact that the animation was provided by several different sources.

Still, when the program's animation is at its best, it is (on a technical level, anyway) as good as any ever produced for a television cartoon series. Much television character animation is so devoid of life that it isn't really character animation, but *DuckTales's* characters more in distinctive, personalized ways, and reflect their emotions well in their motions; they're among the best "actors" ever to appear in a TV cartoon series. The staging, too, is clearly the result of careful thought and planning, as are the sometimes complex camera angles and movements.

And in an age in which most TV cartoons are either lengthy toy commercials, heavy-handed pro-social propaganda, or both, *DuckTales's* emphasis on telling entertaining stories is refreshing. Toy stores don't lack for *DuckTales* toys, of course, and many of the episodes conclude with a clearly-enunciated moral, but such things grow out of the show rather than control it.

Even *DuckTales's* sharpest critics would probably concede that it is at worst among the best TV cartoon programs on the air. But this is a Disney program, and a Disney program inspired by Carl Barks's work, so it asks to be compared against a higher standard than the average animated TV program. Unlike most TV animation studios, which would probably be happy enough to just have the quality of their work go uncriticized, Disney has repeatedly evoked the names of its most famous films and characters, and its reputation for uncompromising quality, in its promotion for the show.

DuckTales is no *Pinocchio*, but if you strip away the hyperbole, Disney's bragging about the program is not unreasonable. Whether Disney should be making TV cartoons at all is a matter that's open to question; in today's

marketplace, there may be no way to produce a program that wouldn't fall under Walt Disney's definition of "cheating." But given that the studio has entered the field, its generally-successful attempt to be the class of the industry is encouraging, and, in a small way, a daring idea in the tradition of *Steamboat Willie*, *Snow White*, and Disneyland.

For thirty years, after all, television animation has been attacked on all sides: by cost-cutting producers, by interfering TV programmers and parent groups, and, in recent years, by toy companies eager to turn the medium into nothing more than a promotional tool. *DuckTales'* quiet revolt against all these forces not only makes it a better program, it might prove a turning point for the industry. If the program does well - and as of this writing it has done very well in the ratings indeed - it may spawn a hoarde of imitators in the same way that *The Smurfs*, *He-Man*, and other popular cartoons have. If the copycats mirror the things that are good about *DuckTales*, that cannot help but be a positive development.

The program's success as an adaptation of Carl Barks's world to TV animation is decidedly mixed. Those who dearly love Barks's work will be the most disappointed in the show of anybody, but then again, only the most hopelessly naive of them would approach the show with high expectations. Barks, being among the best of comic-book cartoonists, is from one perspective among the most ill-suited for limited-animation TV-series treatment. The high level of refinement of his characterizations, plots, and artwork would require the skills of - well, a Walt Disney Productions in its prime - to do them full justice.

The cynical critic would make much of the fact that the show's numerous new characters - the daredevil pilot Launchpad, the little-girl duck Webby, the nephews' governess Mrs. Beakley, and others - seem more like an intrusion into Barks's world than an improvement on it. With the exception of Launchpad, who serves at times as a surrogate for the absent Donald, the new Duckburgians are superfluous and unappealing.

Eccentric inventor Gyro Gearloose, one of the many Barks characters who make guest appearances in DuckTales. (c) 1987 the Walt Disney Company.



But the new characters, and Donald's absence, are the only major intentional liberties that *DuckTales's* creators have taken with their source material, once one realizes that for some reason only a few of the shows are adapted directly from Barks stories. (The Barks stories directly adapted for the show include "The Lemming with the Locket," "Land Beneath the Ground," and his masterpiece, "Back to the Klondike.") The new plotlines, which are a bit repetitive, (too many of them concern time travel) don't compare as Barks's best work - but on the other hand, some of them are better than the work he did in his last few years: "Raiders of the Last Harp," an entertaining episode in which Scrooge finds a lie-detecting harp, falls in the latter category.

Despite the decision not to adapt very many Barks stories, the Good Artist's influence is felt throughout each episode. The program's characterization of Uncle Scrooge is far closer to Barks' than any previous animated Scrooge, and numerous Barks supporting characters - Gyro Gearloose, Magica De Spell, and others - make occasional appearances. Other Barks concepts, from Uncle Scrooge's money bin and "Old Number One Dime" to the convention of all Duckburg citizens being ducks, dogs, or pigs, have been maintained. And most of the stories clearly strive to capture Barks's special blend of action, comedy, and characterization. At its best, as in an excellent sequence in the *DuckTales* movie in which Scrooge and the nephews pilot a treasure-laden ship through the Latin American country of Ronguay, the show succeeds surprisingly well in bringing the flavor of a Barks comic book to the TV screen.

The Barks influence is felt, too, in the show's unpatronizing tone. *DuckTales* has its share of (rather forced) references to current pop culture, but it also builds episodes around mythology, Shakespeare, the Civil War, and even a *Man in the Iron Mask* pastiche. Such story ma-

terial challenges children, rather than merely appealing to their toy-purchasing impulses; if there's any justice in the world, the show will pick up at least a small percentage of the awards that *Fat Albert* garnered for its rather less subtle educational content.

The show's characterizations are perhaps its closest and most encouraging tie to its Disney heritage. How many real characters are there in current television animation? Not many. GI Joe, My Little Pony, and others are the most monotonous of one-note stereotypes, with no more personality or depth than the plastic toys that they're based on.

Uncle Scrooge, though, is a *personality*, a fellow with virtues, character flaws, likable traits, and irritating habits. In TV animation, if you're not a warrior from space, you're almost certainly a sugary-sweet and faddish child (or childlike) animal character. Uncle Scrooge is an animal, but a distinctly elderly and crusty one, and hardly stylish in his old-fashioned top hat and spats. He's a character whom no market-research survey could ever come up with, and his success in his role of *DuckTales's* star says a lot for the idea of letting people like Carl Barks, rather than toy companies, create our TV cartoon characters.

Disney has other TV cartoon animation projects in the works, among them a Winnie-the-Pooh show to premiere shortly on the Disney Channel, and a Chip n' Dale syndicated series further down the road. The studio seems to be in the TV animation game to stay, and *DuckTales* provides it with a solid foundation on which to build. It will be interesting - and indicative of what kind of place the Disney studio is today - to see what it does with it.

Harry McCracken, Animato's co-editor, has contributed to Funnyworld, Nemo, Cinefantastique, and other publications.



KOKO KOMMENTS

A Fleischer Studios Column by G. Michael Dobbs

THE FLEISCHER SUPERMAN CARTOONS PART ONE

"**S**uperman Cartoons of the '40s Are Animation At Its Peak" read a headline in the July 8, 1987 edition of *Variety*. At the Los Angeles International Animation Celebration this Summer, audiences had the opportunity of seeing the Superman shorts on a theater screen in 35mm prints struck from the original negatives, and the reaction to these classic cartoons was overwhelmingly positive.

After 45 years, the Fleischer brothers and their animators and storymen were finally getting the praise they so richly deserve for producing the first successful animated adventure series. Although many animation fans and scholars knew of the Fleischer Superman cartoons, until recently relatively few casual animation fans even knew the cartoons existed.

Home video has changed a little of the recognition factor, but the often-time duped prints used for the public-domain tapes do the cartoons little justice. With the striking of these new prints from the 35mm negatives, one can be sure definitive tapes are on their way to the home market.

Although the Superman cartoons were one of Max Fleischer's greatest accomplishments as a cartoon producer, ironically Max really didn't want to adapt the red-hot cartoon character to the

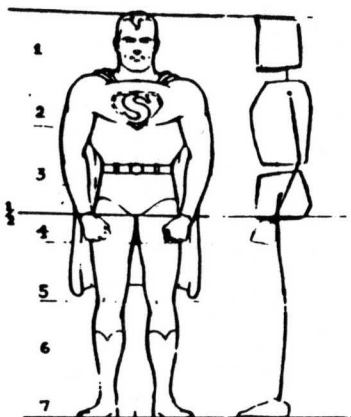
movie screen.

For those of us who have lived our entire lives in the midst of Superman's nearly half-century career, it might be difficult to imagine just how popular the Man of Steel was in 1940. Not only did this fictional character transform the comic-book industry overnight, he was the subject of a hit radio program, first syndicated and then a regular feature of the Mutual Broadcasting System. Superman merchandise was beginning to turn big profits for Harry Donenfeld of National Publications, and a movie tie-in seemed natural.

The natural course for Donenfeld was to approach the studios that produced serials. In 1940, three studios made chapter-plays: Universal, Columbia, and Republic. Universal had had great success with its Flash Gordon serials, and Republic had made Ralph Byrd into a crowd-pleasing Dick Tracy. Adapting a comic-strip feature could be done.

Whether Donenfeld approached the studios or was wooed by their

The illustrations accompanying this article are taken from model sheets used in the production of the Fleischer Superman cartoons. Characters (c) 1987 DC Comics, Inc.



representatives is not known, but he did start negotiations with Republic. In the August 28, 1940, edition of *Variety*, the news that Republic could not meet with Donenfeld's demands was reported. According to the story, Republic could not afford the price set for Superman and announced that it hoped to obtain the rights the following year. The studio had already constructed a balsa-wood dummy that would have been used in some of the proposed flying sequences. Republic put *Mysterious Dr. Satan* into production to fill the gap left by Superman's departure, and the next year produced *The Adventures of Captain Marvel*, based on Superman's biggest comic-book competitor.

Apparently another reason the deal soured with Republic was the question of control of the script. Donenfeld wanted veto power, and Republic simply wouldn't give it to him.

The next week, the September 4, 1940 issue of *Variety* announced that Donenfeld had struck a deal with Paramount to produce animated adventures of Superman. Max Fleischer was to produce the cartoons for Paramount.

Max was not pleased by this announcement, for it meant several important changes in his relationship

with Paramount. The studio was openly dictating to Max what he should produce, a far cry from when Max and his staff developed Betty Boop and sought the rights to Popeye on their own. The announcement also meant that Max would be using another artist's character and would not be in line for any merchandise money. The animation industry was painfully aware that Walt Disney had wisely promoted the tie-in business to support his studio. That kind of activity meant having original characters the producer controlled, and Max had no piece of Superman.

Another factor was cost. Max knew that if done correctly, the Superman shorts would be far more expensive than his other cartoons. Both Max and Dave Fleischer expressed their concern to Paramount officials, who supplied them with the necessary production money.

Finally, audience acceptance was a question. Animation had nearly always been a medium for comedy. Certainly there were notable exceptions, such as Winsor McCay's *The Sinking of the Lusitania*, but other than Bob Clampett's noble but aborted effort to make cartoons based on Edgar Rice Burroughs's Mars books, cartoons were funny.

However, production got underway on the Superman shorts, and the Fleischer animators changed their artistic approach. While the Betty Boop, Popeye, and Color Classics cartoons featured wonderful exaggerations, rubber limbs, and offbeat perspectives, the Superman shorts demanded a tighter, more realistic style. The Fleischer model sheets of the 30s showed animators how to draw their characters with circles. The Superman model sheets used cubes. Although the Fleischer artists had closely imitated E.C. Segar's drawings for the Popeye cartoons, they used the Joe Shuster Superman only as a beginning point. This writer believes the Fleischer Superman was much more dynamically drawn.

An easy way to have animated much of the Superman cartoons would have been to rotoscope many of the action sequences, but the Fleischers decided not to use Max's celebrated invention. The care given the one-reelers meant a long production schedule, and Paramount publicity stated each cartoon took six months to produce in the Miami studio.

Myron Waldman, one of the animators who worked on the series, said the Superman cartoons were hard work, but rewarding. He noted the addition of artists who added drawings to sequences to give the hero the bulk and weight he should have. One of Waldman's cartoons, *Billion Dollar Limited*, has a remarkable scene in which Superman, while pulling a train carrying gold for the government, loses his grip when the gang pursuing the train gasses him. You can feel Superman's struggle to keep the train moving uphill as much as you could if it had been a live-action actor.

Although the screenplays for the Superman shorts were written by Fleischer regulars, apparently there was no interference from Donenfeld and National Publications. Joe Shuster and Jerry Siegel did visit the Miami studio while the shorts were in production, and Shuster did do some drawings for the animation staff, but they contributed nothing else to the series.

The stories were stripped down to the barest of plots, to provide the most action within the seven-to-ten minutes afforded by one reel. A narrator set up the origin of Superman at the beginning of the cartoons, and the memorable "It's a bird, it's a plane..." opening from the Mutual radio series was used to introduce the cartoons. For plots, the studio used the format set up by the comic books: Lois and Clark vie for a story, Lois gets into trouble, and Superman bails her out. Naturally, Clark is around at the end of the story with a knowing wink at the camera.

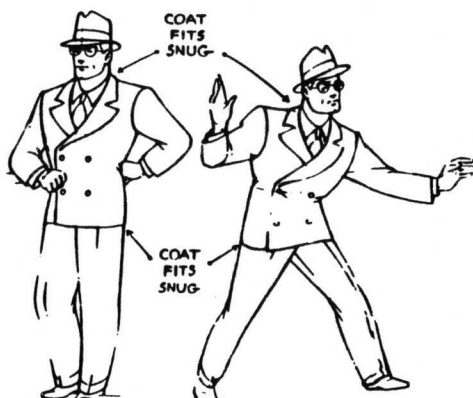
The studio used the cast from the Mutual series for the soundtrack. Bud

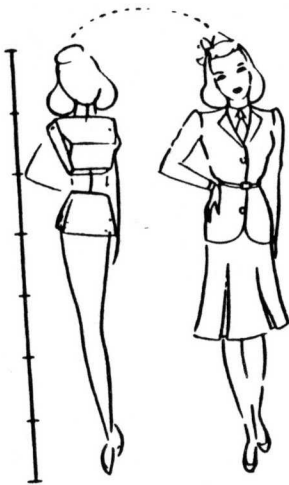
Collyer carried over as Superman, and the cartoons utilized his famous Clark-to-Superman line: "This looks like a job (as Clark) for Superman (several octaves lower as Superman)!" One animator told me that the Florida weather wrecked the studio's sound equipment, and the tracks had to be recorded in New York, but I've not yet obtained corroboration on this issue.

The first Superman short was copyrighted on September 26, 1941, and released later that Fall. The shorts, aside from the first, were all copyrighted as "Superman in..." although that title did not appear on-screen.

Audiences loved the shorts and made them profitable even at the outrageous cost of \$65,000 a cartoon. Critical reaction was mixed. Mike Wear of *Variety* reviewed the second cartoon, *Mechanical Monsters*, in the January 7, 1943, edition and said, "The newspaper cartoon character comes to life with vigor in this second in the new series by Max Fleischer...Jammed with action and the same implausibilities found in the newspaper strip...Better work on the human characters by Fleischer's staff makes this an above-the-ordinary story."

Beginning in January of 1942, Paramount released one Superman short a





month. By July, *Time* magazine, which hardly ever reviewed short subjects, published a grudging review:

"*Superman in the Volcano* (Paramount) is the Man of Steel's eighth cinematic appearance since the movies muscled in on his vast newspaper-magazine-radio audience (estimate: 50,000,000) last September. The pictures also highlight a new U.S. cinema fashion: some 20,000,000 Supermaniacs can hardly wait for Superman's ten-minute, one-reel cartoon to appear once a month in more than 7,000 U.S. movie houses....

"Artistically, *Superman* shorts are the movie cartoon at their worst. Superman looks and acts like a wooden puppet. So do all his playmates. There is little his creators - the old Fleischer Studios (now Famous Studio, Inc.) at Miami, Fla. - can do to improve their hero - even King Disney can't animate human beings satisfactorily. But they did manage to give him a new voice recently. His old voice wasn't manly enough. Now it booms."

A look at *Volcano* will show little if any difference in the voice of our beloved hero, and despite *Time's* panning, even it couldn't deny the

cartoon's popularity.

If there is one legitimate complaint one can have about the series, it is the unevenness of the stories. With the Second World War, the *Superman* shorts were too often propaganda vehicles. *Eleventh Hour*, *Destruction Inc.*, *Jungle Drums*, and *Secret Agent* were somewhat lackluster when compared to the other cartoons in the series. In fact, *Destruction, Inc.* is a disappointment. One animator jokingly called it a "half-assed *Superman* cartoon."

One is tempted to lay the blame for these shorts on the doorstep of the three men who took over the Fleischer studio once Max had sold the operation to Paramount in late spring of 1942. Max had borrowed heavily to build the new studio in Miami, and had counted on the success of *Mr. Bug Goes to Town* to pay his debt to Paramount.

Many rumors circulate about how Paramount brass conspired to get rid of Max and Dave Fleischer, and all I can say after ten years of research is that they took the easy way. They held up the release of *Mr. Bug* until spring of 1942. Originally slated for Christmas 1941 release, the movie failed without the substantial Christmas vacation audience.

Seymour Kneitel, Sam Buchwald, and Isidore Sparber were hired by Paramount to do what the trio had been doing for Max and Dave for years: make cartoons. This they did, only now they were the producers. They continued the *Superman* series and made several of the outstanding entries, including *The Mummy Strikes* and *The Underground World*.

In the next issue of *Animato*, I'll look at each of the *Superman* shorts. Until then, if you have a question or comments, please write to me at 24 Hampden Street, Indian Orchard, MA 01151.

G. Michael Dobbs is the official biographer of Max Fleischer.

HARLEQUIN

A Trivia Column
by Jim Korkis



Hal Seeger, Forgotten Animator!

With the return of Ralph Bakshi to animation, will it be long before the return of Hal Seeger? Seeger is the man responsible for such animated television shows as *Milton the Monster* and *Batfink*. In an interview with animation historian Jerry Beck, Seeger revealed that the female voices on those shows were all done by his wife, Beverly Lasker Seeger (stage name: Beverly Arnold). "She was a member of the Screen Actor's Guild, and I'd rather pay my wife \$25,000 a series than some stranger," stated Seeger. Mrs. Seeger also did the voice of "Kokette," the female companion to Koko the Clown in a series of made-for-TV cartoons using Fleischer's famous clown. (One of the animators on Seeger's cartoons was I. Klein, who seems to have worked just about everywhere. Klein worked on staff at Seeger's doing *Batfink*, but freelanced at home on his *Milton the Monster* stuff. On *Milton the Monster*, he'd deliver a suitcase full of animated drawings ready for inking and painting on cels.)

In Search of Tex Avery!

Those animation who never got a chance to hear Tex Avery have not lost that opportunity. Avery's voice can be heard in several of his cartoons. He was the voice of Junior in the George and Junior shorts for MGM, and was also the voice of Willoughby, the huge, dumb hunting

dog in *The Heckling Hare* (1941), *The Crackpot Quail* (1941), and *Of Fox and Hounds* (1940). And Avery scholar Joe Adamson has pointed out that Avery's "voice pops up from time to time embodied in a hippo or walrus who laughs so hard he can hardly take his next breath." For anyone who wants a clue as to what Avery's voice really sounds like, there are the little "ouches" that come out of a bottle in *Deputy Droopy* (1955).

How to Get a Job as an MGM Animator!

In 1950, Fred Quimby, the Executive Producer of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer animated cartoons, had the following to say about getting a job in the animation business. This excerpt is quoted from Lawrence Lariar's book, *Careers in Cartooning*. "If it is a woman who has some art school experience and is fairly adept with the pen and brush, she might find employment in the inking and painting department. The apprenticeship stage for a man whose goal is animation would be the in-between department. His qualifications should include a natural ability as a sketch artist, one who can use a pencil to advantage in drawing the various characters synonymous with a cartoon studio. An extensive training program has been confined pretty much to the Walt Disney Studio, due to their ample facilities and production requirements. Conversely, the other

studios, because of their limited space, do not have much room for training centers and, therefore, insist on experienced people with the exception of girls in the painting and inking department." Obviously, today's liberated women would not let Fred get away with some of these comments about how women were limited to the "inexperienced" ink and paint ladies while men should skip this step up the ladder to cartoon fame.

What Happened, Chuck?

When Chuck Jones left his MGM animation job on January 1, 1970, he had an agreement with Publishers-Hall Syndicate to develop three half-hour properties for movie or television presentation. The titles? *The Wizard of Id*, *Andy Capp*, and *B.C.*

Charlie Brown Meets Art Buchwald!

Back in 1981, Bill Melendez, responsible for the animated *Peanuts* specials and features, proposed a series of animated half-hours based on the writings of political humorist Art Buchwald. "If things go easy, I know it's right," Melendez stated. "I called Buchwald in Washington and he said 'Great.' We met on storyboards; he never asked for money. He was very helpful. But we couldn't penetrate those network meatheads. What irritates me is when I see the garbage they do put on."

Warner Animators in Caricature!

In the Warner Bros. cartoon *Page Miss Glory* (1936), at the end of the cartoon when Abner, the Hickville Hotel bellhop, runs out into the street, he sees a bunch of hicks on the street who are really clever caricatures of Tex Avery, Bob Clampett, and a few other animators.

How to Kill Humor in One Easy Lesson!

In 1981, a memo circulated the animation studios involved in Saturday morning animation. In part, the memo

stated "Program Practices at CBS has ruled that a character that has been hit or in a fight CAN NOT have (1) eyes at halfmast (2) eyes twirling (3) tongue hanging out (4) dazed or hurt look (5) closed eyes (6) circle of stars around head. NO EXPRESSIONS OF PAIN OR DAZED EXPRESSION! The characters CAN react with frustration or anger at having been foiled again. CAMERA: do not shoot scenes you find with no-nos in them!"

Bakshi Projects that Never Were!

Some of the most amazing animated projects of all time were announced by Ralph Bakshi. In 1981, Bakshi and Columbia Pictures announced that after *American Pop*, Bakshi would be directing a film titled *Crime* (from Richard Hammer's book *Crime in America*) and an animated version of *The Canterbury Tales*.

John Dehner, Animator!

John Dehner is a popular character actor who has appeared in countless television shows and movies. (He's been a regular on at least nine TV series, including *The Baileys of Balboa* and *The Doris Day Show*. He took a break from his acting career in the late 1930s to work as an animator at the Walt Disney Studios. His dad worked at the studio, which is how he got the job. I believe he later returned to Disney to do some voiceover narration, including some work for the compilation animation episodes of *The Wonderful World of Disney*.

Did You Know?

In 1971, Dan O'Neill let his *Odd Bodkins* characters appear in animated television commercials for Bell Telephone?

Jim Korkis is a well-known animation fan who has written for just about every animation and comic-book magazine you can think of.

FLIPBOOKS

A Book Column by David Bastian

WINSOR MCCAY'S PEACEABLE KINGDOM



Winsor McCay: His Life and Art
By John Canemaker
Abbeville; \$49.95

It came in a large cardboard container, and was sealed in plastic wrap. The sort of book you're afraid to handle without having gloves on. A dust jacket of thick, shiny paper protected its cloth-bound hard cover, and the pages inside smelled kind of funny. But though it displayed all the earmarks of an "oversized" coffee-table art book, leafing through the pages revealed (of all things) text! John Canemaker's *Winsor McCay: His Life and Art* is more than just a documentary of the works of one of this century's most prolific and gifted artists. It is the biography of a man who, full of drive and enthusiasm, became one of the most innovative and influential developers of both the comic-strip and animation media.

McCay's life is traced from his birth (the exact date of which remains a mystery) through the many jobs he held as a sign-painter for various circuses and dime museums throughout the midwest, his stint as art director of the Cincinnati Enquirer (during which he was assigned to cover a lynching), and finally his

ending up in New York as a cartoonist for the papers of James Gordon Bennett and William Randolph Hearst. It was there that McCay created the strips *Little Sammy Sneeze* and *Hungry Henrietta*, and the more famous *Dream of the Rarebit Fiend* and *Little Nemo in Slumberland*, the latter unquestionably regarded as one of the true masterpieces of the comic page. It was also in New York that McCay became a popular entertainer on the vaudeville circuit, and one of the first experimentors in film animation.

In a thorough job of investigative reporting, relying heavily on interviews with McCay's grandchildren, Canemaker takes us through the cities and studios McCay inhabited, and accompanies them with a plethora of black-and-white period photos. There are fewer reproductions of the artist's work than I expected (220 pages and only 24 *Little Nemos*), though the ones reproduced are carefully-chosen

Above: self-portrait of the artist as a young man. A 1907 drawing of McCay at the age of twenty-one.

examples of McCay's technical abilities, including his amazing alarcity for conveying dynamic perspecting and sequential motion. In fact, it is Cane-maker's thesis that the very "animated-ness" of McCay's early work is what led him to extend his talents beyond the confines of the newspaper page and explore the illusion of actual movement that the motion picture (then in its infancy) afforded.

And it can certainly be said that more so than any other comic-strip artist of the last hundred years, McCay's drawings do indeed move! Buildings sprout legs and give chase, giants run off with entire city blocks under their arms, and most importantly, bed-frames take flight!

McCay himself is portrayed as a man who "used his obsessively detailed drawings as a means to distance himself from problems and unpleasantness in his personal and professional life." Indeed, McCay is recounted to have carried his drawing board with him on his vaudeville tours to complete newspaper drawing assignments while backstage between shows. The very act of drawing is said to have filled McCay with a "strange peace" he seldom found in reality. In psychological terms, McCay is described as a behaviorist and a high-achiever whose compulsive need to draw would later serve as a neccessary attribute for an animator.

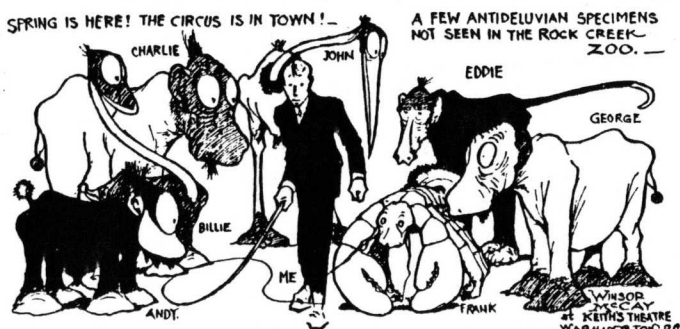
The *Nemo* strips are used as a barometer of McCay's changing temperament: the more turbulent his life was becoming, the more gloomy an outlook the strips projected. Set in the dream-state, *Little Nemo* was a veritable testing ground for subconscious problem-solving and wish-fulfillment, both of which McCay explored in a format where he had total control over the outcome. And what control he had! McCay's drawings are compared to those of Daumier, Degas, and Durer, and his creation of a fantasy world with that of L. Frank Baum's *Oz* and Lewis Carroll's *Wonderland*.

Though it could be argued that many of his conclusions drawn from the information gathered are pure speculation intended to create a romanticized view of the angst-ridden artist cavorting in turn-of-the-century New York City, Cane-maker is unafraid to show McCay at his least inspired, as when the third and final incarnation of the *Little Nemo* series faltered while McCay channeled his creative impetus into fashioning his animated films. Likewise, McCay's editorial cartoons for Hearst were often hastily cranked out to illustrate the monologue of an opinionated editor whose isolationist feelings McCay did not share.

Nor is McCay said to be the first animator, as so many writings before

A newspaper illustration commemorating a 1923 Washington booking of the vaudeville act in which McCay showed his remarkably sophisticated animated films.

Winsor and His Playmates





Little Nemo and friends: the stars of an enormously popular comic strip, a Victor Herbert Broadway musical, early comic-strip merchandise...and Winsor McCay's first animated film.

this have asserted; his debt to the "trickfilm" makers who preceded him is made clear. Instead, McCay's immeasurable contribution to the art of personality animation is put into perspective by comparing stills from eight of the ten animated films he made (three of which exist today only as fragments) to the more mechanical experiments of J. Stuart Blackton and Emile Cohl.

This book is not Canemaker's first visit with the career of Winsor McCay. Before he made his film *Remembering Winsor McCay* (1976), the now-famous "father of animation" was virtually unknown even to most fans of the medium. For my purposes as an instructor of animation, his film negates the need to rent *Little Nemo*, *Gertie the Dinosaur*, and *The Sinking of the Lusitania*, as all three are completely contained within the documentary, *Gertie* being narrated by John Fitzsimmons, McCay's assistant animator, who recalls the vaudeville spiel McCay performed when appearing live with the film. As a historical document, it is indispensable.

Canemaker, unlike most of today's writers on the subject of animation who have virtually made a career out of being a fan, emerged during the "animation renaissance" of the late '60s and early

'70s, the artists of which were as much art historians as filmmakers, committed to paying tribute to the animators who came before them. And now in the '80s, thanks to people like Canemaker, the forefathers of animation are finally receiving the recognition entitled to them.

McCay, more than anyone else in the history of animation, deserves to be honored with a book of this type, for being the one to take animation out of the category of "technical experiment" and into the category of "magic." His *Little Nemo* film need not be preceded by a disclaimer reminding the viewer to withhold judgement until he places the film in its proper time-frame. Show any child in the Transformer-ridden '80s this film and he will immediately respond to the characters' personalities. He doesn't even need to be familiar with the characters from the comic strip. That, in my humble opinion, is magic, and there is a welcome spot in my film library for just such a magician.

David Bastian recently had a dream that there were no such things as books on animation. He awoke the next day and cursed the rarebit he had eaten the night before.

'TOONS on TAPE

A Video Column by Matthew Hasson

The Beatles Yellow Submarine
MGM/UA Home Video; \$29.95

(For a review of the movie, refer to *Animato* #6.)

Yellow Submarine has been long overdue for video release. Although the "mind-blowing" visuals may lose a little of their impact on the small screen, it is still a treat for the eyes and even more so for the ears. This 60s classic now has a superb digitally-remastered stereo soundtrack, and lucky owners of stereo VCRs can now hear the music in crisp, clear high-fidelity sound which is almost equal to that of the *Yellow Sub* compact disc released this past Summer. The eleven Beatles songs used in the movie make excellent music videos in their own right, and some have already been shown on MTV. Most of the tracks have been redubbed, with the exception of "It's All Too Much," which is in fact a slightly different version of the song than that which is on the *Yellow Sub* soundtrack LP.

On a disappointing note, the song "Hey Bulldog," which had been deleted from all American prints of the movie, is missing from the home video as well. According to the November issue of *Beatlefan* magazine, a consultant for MGM/UA did in fact pass on a suggestion that the British print which contained "Hey Bulldog" should be used for the video, but that the company responded that if it took the time to obtain a copy of the British print, it wouldn't be able to have the video out on its scheduled release date. This is too

bad, since they could have touted it as a "special longer version" if only they had taken the extra time. So once again, marketing priorities have pushed aside quality. (It would be interesting to see if British copies of the video are also missing the song.)

Aside from that one shortcoming, *Yellow Submarine* on video is as enjoyable as ever. The brilliant psychedelic colors shine bolder than ever, especially when compared with the scratchy, washed-out prints that have been showing on local TV stations in recent years. Not only does the music sound better, but the audio has been digitally remixed to simulate stereo (voices and sound effects coming from different channels, etc). Now it's possible to hear each and every bad pun spread throughout the film (Ringo: "Look - a cyclops!" Paul: "Can't be. He's got two eyes." Ringo: "Must be a bicyclops!").

For the animation and Beatle fan alike, *Yellow Submarine* is a welcome addition to any video collection.

Other 'toons on tape for the holiday season:

Lady and the Tramp
Disney Home Video; \$29.95

This movie, originally issued with a mono soundtrack, has been digitally remixed by the Disney folks in the same way as *Yellow Submarine*, with the music and sound FX in separate channels. *Lady and the Tramp* has its share of songs too, though I don't think too many people will be cranking up their stereos for "It's a Beautiful Night."

Crisp, bold hi-fi stereo does add a nice dimension to any film though, especially a Disney feature.

Will Vinton's Festival of Claymation
Pacific Arts Video

This is a shortened version of the compilation feature that was making the rounds of movie houses earlier this year. It is a collection of some of Vinton's Claymation shorts, most notably *The Creation*, *Mountain Music*, *The Great Cognito*, and *Dinosaur*. Also included are behind-the-scenes excerpts from a Claymation documentary showing how the characters and sets are constructed and animated.

There were many more selections included in the theatrical version of this film, but many of them are missing for copyright reasons. Some of the funniest parts of the remaining material are the linking segments used to tie the various shorts together. The "hosts" of the program are two dinosaur movie critics named Herb and Rex, who are modeled on Gene Siskel and Roger Ebert, and the films are shown with some commentary in the same format as Siskel and Ebert's TV show.

Although some of the best bits from the feature didn't make it onto this tape (John Fogerty's "Vanz Kant Danz" video, the singing California raisins, and Domino Pizza's "Noid" commercials), *Festival of Claymation* is still 53 minutes' worth of Will Vinton's best (with the possible exception of the rather boring *A Christmas Gift*). It makes a good companion tape to *The Adventures of Mark Twain*, Vinton's first feature, which was released last year.

Streetsfight (Formerly titled *Coonskin*)
Academy Entertainment; \$79.95

Originally released on a very limited basis in 1974, Ralph Bakshi's controversial film depicting street life in Harlem is loosely based on Joel Chandler Harris's "Uncle Remus" tales, but has very little resemblance to Walt Disney's

Song of the South, apart from using live action linking segments to tie the animated stories together. The "story-teller" in this film is Scatman Crothers, who tells the story of "Brer Rabbit, Brer Bear, and Brer Fox" (a preacher). In the original Harris stories these characters are arch enemies, with Fox and Rabbit usually trying to eliminate Bear. However, in *Streetsfight* they are allies in a battle to eliminate their neighborhood of drug dealers, corrupt police, and a Mafia Kingpin.

This film contains strong language and very graphic violence, thus its R rating. It also raised somewhat of a controversy on its original release for "stereotypical" portrayal of blacks, Italians, and homosexuals. There is nothing offensive about the Rabbit, Bear, and Fox, but there are a few scenes which feature a "Stephen Fetchit" type character in order to portray the old image of black people in the media. Some people will also be offended by the Mafia and gay stereotypes. Perhaps the film's greatest controversy was its original title of *Coonskin*. Director Ralph Bakshi says he would prefer the film to be issued with its original title, but he no longer controls the rights to it. "If I had to retitle it, I would call it *Coonskin*, and in parenthesis *I'm Sorry*," says Bakshi.

It may be difficult to find this film in video stores because it is definitely not for children, and there is not too great a demand for "adult" animation (unfortunately). However, if your video dealer has copies of Bakshi's previous features, *Fritz the Cat* and *Heavy Traffic*, chances are it may also carry *Streetsfight*. If so, check it out. However, don't spend \$79.95 on it unless you simply have to own every film by Ralph Bakshi.

Matthew Hasson is an Boston-based cartoon buff who enjoys hearing from other collectors of animation on videotape. He can be reached c/o Animato.

SHORT SUBJECTS

Reviews of Recent Films and Books

Pinocchio and the Emperor of the Night (1987). Directed by Hal Sutherland. Produced by Lou Scheimer. Voices: Scott Grimes (Pinocchio), Tom Bosley (Geppetto), Rickie Lee Jones (Good Fairy), Don Knotts (Gee Whillikers), Ed Asner (Scalawag), Frank Welker (Igor), William Windom (Puppetino), Jonathan Harris (Grumblebee), James Earl Jones (The Emperor).

I must be getting good at this. Filmation's *Pinocchio* feature is exactly as I thought it would be. I had hoped that it would somehow be better than my expectations, and though there were some surprises, it is no animated classic.

In fact, the whole film, though meant as sequel to *Pinocchio*, has a story which runs parallel to the original Disney movie. Pinocchio, a real boy as the film begins, is celebrating his first anniversary as a human. The Blue-Fairy er... Good Fairy makes an appearance (ala She-Ra, with Princess of Power-like special effects) and sings a nice song, "Freedom of Choice" (although there is absolutely no emotion on her face as she lip syncs it).

Geppetto sends Pinocchio on an errand to deliver a jewel box, and the Good Fairy sends along a new friend (and conscience) Jiminy-Cric... Gee Whillikers, a wooden toy bug brought to life, to watch over him. Pinocchio is tricked out of his jewel box by two con artists, Honest-John and... er Scalawag, a racoon, and his monkey assistant Igor (the best animated character in the movie).

To make a long story short, Pinocchio

falls in love with a female marionette named Twinkle, and falls into the clutches of Stromboli Puppetino, who uses his magic to turn Pinocchio back into a puppet (a truly frightening sequence). Later, Pinocchio sets out to retrieve his stolen jewel box and has an adventure with Scalawag and Igor at sea, eventually being swallowed by Monstro... a giant carnival ship which is the portal to Pleasure-Island... "The Land Where Dreams Come True," and the Empire of the Night.

A subplot involving Gee Whillikers and a Mr. Bug-type society of insects versus a giant bullfrog serves to stretch the story to ninety minutes. The Emperor of the Night is a terrifying creature straight out of a Marvel comic book (James Earl Jones doing his Darth Vader voice), but he seems out of place compared to the other simply (and in some cases crudely) designed characters.

More animation and airbrushed cels do not a theatrical feature make. A retread story, ugly character design, and flat backgrounds all serve to remind us of the sad state of studio animation today. Filmation is proudly boasting that this film was entirely produced in this country. Unfortunately, it is nothing to be proud of.

Jerry Beck

Doing Their Bit: Wartime American Animated Short Films, 1939-1945. By Michael S. Shull and David E. Wilt. McFarland and Company, Inc; \$29.95.

Doing Thier Bit is a smart little book that documents the animated films

released during the United States' involvement in the two World Wars. It's also a reminder that once upon a time animation was used for social comment as well as entertainment for all ages.

The book begins with a short, but interesting, chapter on World War I cartoons. Since the silent era is still very much uncharted territory, the references to many obscure titles is fascinating. With appropriate descriptions, the authors whet my appetite for such cartoons as *Putting Fritz on the Water Wagon* and *How Charlie Captured the Kaiser* (a Charlie Chaplin cartoon). The authors mention McCay's *The Sinking of the Lusitania* and Charley Bowers's *A.W.O.L.*, plus a dozen others with even the smallest reference to world war events at the time.

The next chapter covers the thirties with an insight that hadn't occurred to me before. Because of world tensions at the time, many cartoons, according to the authors, were intentionally peace-oriented. By highlighting examples in this chapter, their point becomes clear. Obviously cartoons such as Columbia's *Disarmament Conference* (1931), *Neighbors* (1935), and *Peace Conference* (1935) were meant to be topical references to the current situation. But by including *Sunshine Makers* (Van Beuren), *Music Land* (Disney), *A Feud There Was* (Warner) and others in this discussion, they show how these cartoons reflected the pacifist mood of the United States in the 1930s.

The main section of the book is a filmography which describes 271 cartoons in depth, with complete screen credits. They seem to have listed everything with even the most minor references to the war or homefront activities. If a cartoon has a card with an A card or a food rationing gag, it's here, along with the more obvious *Der Fuhrer's Face*, *Scrap the Japs*, etc. Footnotes, bibliography, and thorough index complete the book.

The filmography is a pleasure to read -

the authors recall many great cartoons and provide good descriptions of many rarities, such as Terrytoons' *Mopping Up* and *The Last Round Up*.

I only have two problems with this book. First, the illustrations. Of the twenty or so pictures in the book, at least eighteen are horrible photos taken from a TV screen. There stills are so bad they decided to put an outline around the relevant part of the picture to help you see it better. The result is laughable!

Secondly, the book basically covers wartime theatrical releases shown to the general public. Because of this there is barely a mention of Warner's Private Snafu cartoons or any other government-sponsored wartime cartoons. Because of this unwritten rule, they list a few non-theatrical titles in their filmography, such as Disney's *Defense Against Invasion*, UPA's *Hell Bent For Election*, and the previously unknown *Point Rationing of Foods*. My feeling is that the authors should have either gone all the way and listed everything including the Snafus, or have stuck to their own rules and left out all non-theatricals. Going halfway as they did makes their work look incomplete.

Though it's expensive, I do recommend *Doing Their Bit* for the ground it does cover - spotlighting a unique chapter in the history of American studio animation.

Jerry Beck

Walt Disney's Snow White & the Making of the Classic Film. By Richard Holliss and Brian Sibley. Simon and Schuster; \$14.95.

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland. By Lewis Carroll; illustrated by David Hall. Simon and Schuster; \$14.95.

How the Disney-sanctioned Disney book industry has changed in the last five years or so. It used to be that Disney books - even the bad ones - were events, works of huge size and price that

couldn't help but make their presence known. Anybody who has ever bought (even at remaindered price), read, or tried to store on a standard-sized shelf a book like *Treasures of Disney Animation Art* will know what I mean.

Lately, however, things have changed. Disney books are smaller, in ambition and price, and more likely to fade into the forest of volumes on a bookstore's shelves. The recent books have something else in common: almost all of them have been packaged by a single firm, a British concern called the Justin Knowles Publishing Group. This is the company responsible for the recent "biographies" of Mickey Mouse, Donald Duck, and Goofy, the volume on Mickey Mouse memorabilia, and several other works.

One of its recent efforts, *Walt Disney's Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs & the Making of the Classic Film*, is an uneasy combination of animation history and storybook released to coincide with the film's anniversary celebration this year. The book is divided into three sections: an account of the making of *Snow White*, a retelling of the story, and an essay about the film's aftermath, including critical response and merchandising. All three parts are heavily illustrated, the first two with many drawings that haven't seen print before, including some very early, very interesting sketches. (The final section is illustrated with photographs of merchandise, including a German poster that shows a crowd scene that omits Happy and includes Grumpy twice - an odd quality that goes unmentioned in the book's accompanying caption.)

This slim volume - 88 pages - is prevented from being what a book about *Snow White* should be by its hybrid format. The retelling of the story, uncomfortably plopped down in the middle, is pointless; it's too perfunctory to capture the flavor of the film, and seems aimed at a young audience that would not appreciate the book's

historical material and rough, often unfinished art.

Richard Holliss and Brian Sibley's two essays are straightforward and readable, but they're so dry and factual that the excitement that surrounded the making of *Snow White* - and the excitement of viewing it - never comes across. (The text only comes alive when it quotes story sessions and other firsthand accounts of the film's production, which it wisely does often.) In both chapters, it's the well chosen illustrations that hold the most interest.

Like the Knowles Group's books on Mickey, Donald, and Goofy, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs & the Making of the Classic Film* reads like the work of knowledgeable but rather dispassionate writers. It certainly never reads like the work of opinionated animation buffs. Perhaps for *Snow White*'s next rerelease, the Disney people will get someone like John Culhane to write the fascinating book that the making of *Snow White* can surely inspire.

Another recent Justin Knowles Publishing Group book is altogether more successful. Anyone who (like me) was tantalized by the few *Alice in Wonderland* paintings by David Hall that were printed a few years ago in *Treasures of Disney Animation Art* will want to seek out the remarkable new edition of *Alice* illustrated by David Hall. Dozens of Hall's illustrations, many in color, accompany the unabridged text of Lewis Carroll's famous story. The result is both a handsome edition of *Alice* and an example of just how complex and ambitious even the most preliminary of work on a Disney animated feature once was.

Hall produced his paintings and drawings in 1939, during the earliest stages of work on Disney's adaptation of *Alice*. His work, which served to illustrate the first story work on the feature, bears virtually no resemblance to what reached the screen in 1952, but it is a fascinating interpretation of the

story in its own right. Hall's draughtsmanship is remarkable, and his moody, claustrophobic illustrations sometimes rival the Tenniel pictures in the perfection of their visualization of Carroll's words. (Virtually alone among post-Tenniel *Alice* illustrators, Hall is neither imitative of Tenniel's work, nor obsessed with departing from it.)

The temptation to wonder what Disney's *Alice* would have been like if the studio had based it on Hall's work is irresistible. It's clear that it would have been a less "Disneyesque" film, but probably one which would have far better conveyed the flavor of Carroll's (and Tenniel's) work.

Brian Sibley has written an excellent afterword which provides the story behind the Hall illustrations, as well as many other heretofore-unrevealed details of the many years of work that went into Disney's *Alice*. The amazing fact is that *Alice's* almost fifteen-year genesis and myriad stages of development were perfectly typical of the Disney features of the postwar period. This book might serve as a rough model for similar volumes drawn from early work on other Disney features. I hope it sells well enough to do so.

Harry McCracken

Marlene Dietrich and Betty Boop
Editori Del Grifo; \$10.00.

There can't have been many stranger animation-related books published than *Marlene Dietrich and Betty Boop*. This Italian-published paperback, released in conjunction with a film and comic-strip festival in Ascona, Switzerland, pays eccentric tribute to the greatness of Miss Dietrich and Miss Boop in poetry, prose, and graphic art. The book's introductory material, presented in Italian, German, French, and English, includes prefaces by the Mayor of Ascona and other dignitaries, numerous Dietrich/Boop quotations, and two poems by an Italian poet named Vito Riviello, among other things. Twenty-one pages are taken up

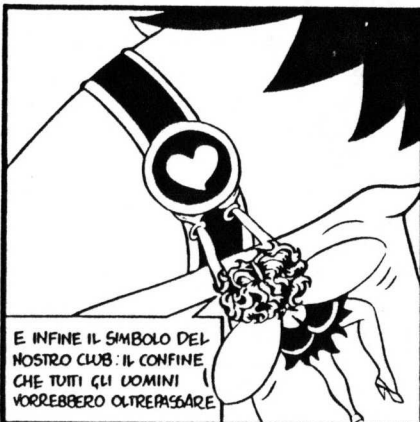
by vintage black-and-white photographs of Marlene Dietrich, and several pages are devoted to Fleischer publicity material featuring Betty.

But the bulk of the book is given to artwork inspired by Boop and Dietrich, apparently commissioned for this volume. The artists include Milo Manara, Guido Crepax, and Hugo Pratt, as well as many other cartoonists less well known in the United States. (Fans interested in the contemporary Italian comics scene will find the book an invaluable potpourri of work.)

What they've done with the subject of Marlene Dietrich and Betty Boop varies widely. Many of the contributors have done separate pieces for each star; others have managed to include them both in a single illustration. The formats range from fairly straightforward portraits to short comic-book style stories to experimental drawings. Among the best contributions are Sesar's delicate cover illustration, which somehow presents Marlene and Betty in one cheesecake shot without making either of them look out of place; and Vittorio Giardino's one-page comic noir mystery, which also adroitly features both of the book's subjects. (On the other hand, some the artists seem much more interested in Marlene than Betty, and a few of the drawings have precious little to do with either.)

This book is obviously a product of the European romantization of American pop culture that has produced the infamous French deification of Jerry Lewis, among other things. The tone of most of the book's work is reverential and distanced; there's not much evidence that the contributors to the book are terribly familiar with the Fleischer films themselves (indeed, some of them seem to think that Betty was primarily a comic-strip character). But the book's unusual outlook gives it much of its considerable quirky appeal for the American cartoon fan.

Harry McCracken



The FOX REPORT

A News Column by John Cawley



Bakshi, Pryor, and Blade Runner

Ralph Bakshi is looking past his current SatAM version of Mighty Mouse on CBS. The controversial filmmaker has signed a pact with Richard Pryor to produce two features to star the comedian. One film will be all live-action, the other live-action with animation. Bakshi will co-write both films. For TV, Bakshi is planning an animated version of Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner*. The 1982 sci-fi feature about renegade robots starred Harrison Ford. No release dates for any of the projects were given.

Disney's Oliver to Arrive Late(r)

Oliver and the Dodger, Disney's upcoming animated feature, has now been rescheduled to be released during Thanksgiving, 1988. This is later than the previously announced Summer 1988 release. The film, loosely based on Dickens's *Oliver Twist*, features a group of crooked canines under the direction of a human thief. (For those keeping track, the film was originally set to be released during the Summer of 1988.)

Hanna-Barbera Moves Back to Features

H-B has begun a move back into theatrical feature films. First on its list is an animated version of *The Pied Piper of Hamelin*. The property is being developed with Leslie Brisucusse, Oscar-winning composer (*Dr. Dolittle*), who will write ten songs for the film. Budget for the film is over \$10 million.

Also in the works at H-B is a feature starring Tom and Jerry. The cat and mouse were created by Bill Hanna and Joe Barbera back in their MGM days.

Ted Turner has wanted to move into feature production and feels the duo would make a good start. H-B is now working on a script. Budget for Turner's feature would be in the \$5 million range.

Animation on Home Video

Get Animated's *Animation Home Video Directory* is now available. It lists and described over 1300 videotapes and discs that feature animation. Spiral-bound for easy use, the book contains subject listings and is cross-referenced. Price for the volume is \$15 (US/Canada) from Get Animated!, PO Box 1582, Burbank, CA 91507.

Just \$29.95!

There is an unusually fine selection this holiday season of tapes at this magic price for selling animated features in home video. Top of anyone's list will include Disney's *Lady and the Tramp* (1955/one of Disney's most enjoyable films), Spielberg/Bluth's *An American Tail* (1986/flawed but financially successful), and the Beatles/George Dunning's *Yellow Submarine* (1968/lots of fun, fantasy, and music).

Also of interest at the same price are *Yogi's Great Escape*, a new made-for-TV feature from H-B starring Yogi, Snagglepuss, and others (which received only one airing), and *Through the Looking Glass*, a "contemporary version" of Lewis Carroll's tale by Australia's Burbank studio with voices by Jonathan Winters and Mr. T. (?!?)

John Cawley is an animation writer and historian, and publisher of the Get Animated! line of publications.

ADVERTISING IN *ANIMATO*

Animato is a great place to advertise original art, books, films and tapes, and other products of interest to our enthusiastic readership of animation fans. \$25.00 will buy a full page of space; half-pages are \$12.50. We can typeset your ad for only \$5.00 extra. Classified ads are also available, at 10 cents a word (20 word minimum). Ad deadline for the next issue is February 15, 1988. Please make all checks payable to Mike Ventrella.

To place an ad, or for further information, write us at:

Animato Advertising
PO Box 1240
Cambridge, MA 02238

ROCKY AND BULLWINKLE FANS! *Frostbite Falls Far-Flung Flier*, quarterly newsletter devoted to Jay Ward cartoons. Four issues for \$4. Charles Ulrich, c/o Swick, 1215-D Palomas SE, Albuquerque, NM 87108.

ANIMATION COLLECTABLES! Books, videos, art and more. Send for free list! Korkis & Cawley, PO Box 1643, Burbank CA 91507.

16MM CARTOONS. Superb selection of Warners, Fleischer, Avery, Harman-Ising, much more. Great stuff!! SASE for large list. \$5 discount on first purchase to *Animato* readers. C.G. Vesce, Box 223, Wanaque, NJ 07465.

FREE CATALOG OF ORIGINAL ANIMATION CELS!

Own, collect, display America's hottest collectible:
Original paintings actually filmed in making Hollywood
cartoons. Color catalog illustrates hundreds of one-of-a-kind
animation cel paintings: Mickey Mouse, Bugs Bunny...all
your favorite characters. Many vintage drawings, too.

GALLERY LAINZBERG

200 Guaranty Building
Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52401

FOR A FREE CATALOG, CALL 1-800-553-9995

